

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04708 01 OF 02 151031Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----096659 151032Z /10

O P 150950Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9235
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4708

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UN, MARR, LE, IS, PINT, PINS
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: SOME UNSPEAKABLE THOUGHTS ABOUT 425.

1. SUMMARY. FAILURE OF THE LEBANESE TO GET A FORCE
BELOW THE LITANI IMMEDIATELY WILL NOT MEAN THE END OF
THE WORLD.

2. THE KAWKABA PROBLEM HAS BEEN A USEFUL LESSON IN THE
LIMITS OF OUR INFLUENCE. WHILE IT MAY EVENTUALLY PROVE
POSSIBLE TO GET LEBANESE TROOPS INTO TIBNIN, IT MAY NOT.
BEFORE WE DECIDE THAT FAILURE TO DO SO WOULD BE
CATASTROPHIC, WE SHOULD TAKE A DISPASSIONATE LOOK AT
THE PROBLEM.

3. SENDING A LEBANESE FORCE TO SOUTH LEBANON HAS BEEN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04708 01 OF 02 151031Z

A GENERALLY ACCEPTED DESIDERATUM EVER SINCE THE
END OF THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR. IT WAS ACCEPTED
WISDOM THAT A LEBANESE MILITARY PRESENCE THERE
WOULD PERMIT A GRADUAL REASSERTION OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY
AND A REDUCTION OF THE INCREASINGLY DESTRUCTIVE
CONFLICT BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND CHRISTIANS, A
CONFLICT IN WHICH THE SHI'A BYSTANDERS WERE THE

PRINCIPAL VICTIMS.

3. WHEN IT CAME TIME TO PASS SC RESOLUTION 425, SOME UNEXCEPTIONABLE LANGUAGE ABOUT HELPING THE GOL IN THE RETURN OF ITS EFFECTIVE AUTHORITY TO THE REGION WAS PUT IN. ACTION BY THE LEBANESE TO HELP OBTAIN THIS OBJECTIVE SOON BECAME A TOUCHSTONE OF THE SUCCESS OF THE RESOLUTION AND OF UNIFIL. MY FRENCH COLLEAGUE AND I WENT AROUND PUTTING THE ARM ON SENIOR GOL OFFICIALS TRYING TO GET THEM TO MOVE TROOPS SOUTH EVEN IN SYMBOLIC NUMBERS. FINALLY, FOR REASONS THAT ARE NOT YET COMPLETELY CLEAR, THE LEBANESE TOOK OUR ADVICE, DECIDED TO MOVE, DID IT HURRIEDLY AND WITHOUT ADEQUATE PLANNING, CAME A CROPPER AND NOW EXPECT US TO RESCUE THEM IN THE NAME OF 425 AND REASSERTION OF THEIR AUTHORITY.

4. THIS PART OF 425, HOWEVER, COMES UP SQUARELY AGAINST THE FIEFDOM THE ISRAELIS HAVE ESTABLISHED IN SOUTH LEBANON. THEY HAVE CREATED AN EXTRA COUNTRY OF ISRAEL WHICH IS RULED IN A SHADOWY WAY BY THE ISRAELI ARMY THROUGH A GROUP OF RENEGADE ARMY OFFICERS, OR WARLORDS, IN THE WORDS OF TEL AVIV. IN THIS BORDER REGION THERE IS NO REAL EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY, BUT A DE FACTO HEGEMONY OF THE STRONGEST POWER IN THE AREA. MEANWHILE, THE ISRAELIS HAVE ACCEPTED UNIFIL BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY EFFECTIVE. (THE SECRET OF THIS EFFECTIVENESS, OF COURSE, IS ARAFAT'S SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04708 01 OF 02 151031Z

CURRENT POLICY OF RESTRAINT. IF HE STOPS COOPERATING, THE UNIFIL BARRIER'S PERMEABILITY WILL BECOME APPARENT IMMEDIATELY.) THERE IS THUS NO SERIOUS MILITARY THREAT TO UNIFIL, BUT THERE IS TO THE LEBANESE BATTALION.

5. GIVEN THE CURRENT HYSTERIA OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITARY AND MILITIA LEADERS IN SOUTH LEBANON, THEY PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME TO OPPOSE A LEBANESE ARMY PRESENCE IN THE TIBNIN AREA. WHETHER RANK AND FILE CHRISTIANS FEEL THE SAME WAY IS PERHAPS IRRELEVANT, BECAUSE IT IS THE LEADERS LIKE HADDAD AND CHIDIAC WHO GIVE THE ORDERS AND THEY SEEM TO HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL FOLLOWING. HAVING NOW DISCOVERED THE STATE OF MIND OF THE CHRISTIANS, THE GOL IS UNLIKELY TO VENTURE THEIR ARMY INTO THE AREA UNTIL THERE HAS BEEN EITHER A CHANGE IN THOSE ATTITUDES, OR SOME ASSURANCES THE ISRAELIS WILL CONTRL THE CHRISTIANS, SOMETHING THE ISRAELIS SAY THEY CANNOT DO ALTERNATIVELY, ANOTHER SITE, REMOTE FROM THE ENCLAVES BUT STILL SOUTH OF THE LITANI MIGHT BE CHOSEN, BUT THAT WOULD PERHAPS BE POLITICALLY EMBARRASSING AS WELL AS PUTTING THE ARMY AWKWARDLY CLOSE TO THE PALESTINIANS.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04708 02 OF 02 151038Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----096697 151039Z /10

O P 150950Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9236
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4708

EXDIS

6. DOES IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE UNIFIL MANDATE?
WHAT IF THERE IS NO LEBANESE ARMY IN THE SOUTH THIS MONTH?
WHAT IF THERE IS NONE NEXT MONTH, OR THE MONTH AFTER OR
SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR FROM NOW? DOES THEIR ABSENCE
AFFECT UNIFIL'S ABILITY TO OPERATE? APPARENTLY NOT.
WOULD THEIR PRESENCE IMPROVE ITS ABILITY TO OPERATE?
NOT GREATLY, WE GATHER. AS FOR THE ATTITUDES OF THE
CONTRIBUTORS, WE UNDERSTAND, THE NORWEGIANS SAID THEY
WOULD LEAVE NATO IF THEY COULDN'T SEND THEIR BATTALION,
THAT THE FRENCH ARE HERE FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE AND ARE
GOING TO STAY FOR AWHILE, AND THAT THE OTHERS DO NOT
REALLY CARE ALL THAT MUCH ABOUT THE ARRIVAL OF A LEBANESE
UNIT WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE SUPPLIED BY UNIFIL, WHICH
WILL BE A TARGET OF INCOMING SHELLS FROM THE CHRISTIANS
AND WHICH WILL COMPLICATE THEIR TASKS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04708 02 OF 02 151038Z

7. RESOLUTION 425 HAS ACCOMPLISHED MUCH. IT HAS HELPED GET THE ISRAELIS OUT OF MOST OF SOUTH LEBANON; IT HAS HELPED RESTORE PEACE TO THAT AREA, WHICH IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF RECOVERY; AND IT IS HELPING TO KEEP THE PALESTINIANS AT BAY. THAT'S QUITE A BIT. REASSERTION OF LEBANESE AUTHORITY WILL HAVE TO COME MORE SLOWLY THAN WE THOUGHT. THERE ARE SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATIONS WHICH MUST BE MADE, AND A FEW PROBLEMS AROUND BEIRUT MAY HAVE TO BE SETTLED FIRST. THE INHABITANTS OF THE ENCLAVES WILL HAVE TO BE REASSURED AS TO THE INTENTIONS OF THEIR MOSLEM NEIGHBORS, AND THAT THE SYRIANS ARE NOT BEHIND THE MOVE. THIS IS POSSIBLE, BUT IT WILL TAKE A LITTLE TIME.

8. WE DOUBT THAT THE FAILURE OF A SINGLE LEBANESE COMPANY TO GO TO TIBNIN BEFORE SEPTEMBER 15 WILL MEAN THE COLLAPSE OF UNIFIL. THAT ORGANIZATION IS MUCH MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN THAT AND IS A GOING CONCERN TODAY; IT HAS NO NEED TO BE APOLOGETIC ABOUT ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS. MEANWHILE, WE CANNOT EXPECT THE POORLY-EQUIPPED AND DIS-ORGANIZED LEBANESE ARMY TO UNDERTAKE ANY MORE LEAPS IN THE DARK FOR AWHILE.

9. WE SUGGEST THAT WE ENCOURAGE THE LEBANESE TO APPRAISE THE PROBLEM REALISTICALLY AND TO MAKE CAREFUL, PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS TO MOVE TROOPS WHEN THEY CAN DO SO EFFICIENTLY. IN THE MEANTIME, WE SHOULD STOP REGARDING THIS AS AN EMERGENCY, STOP SLUGGING EVERYTHING NIAC OR IMMEDIATE, AND JUST RELAX A LITTLE. WE ARE NOT IN A CRISIS. WE ARE IN A MESS.

10. AN ALTERNATIVE WE MIGHT CONSIDER IF WE DECIDE WE ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE THAT UNIT IN THE SOUTH IS TO BRING IN HELICOPTERS FROM THE SIXTH FLEET AND TRANSPORT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04708 02 OF 02 151038Z

THE LEBANESE TO TIBNIN WITH THEM. I REALIZE THIS IS HERESY THESE DAYS, BUT IT WOULD BE A CONCRETE MANIFESTATION OF U.S. SUPPORT THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE GOL CONSIDERABLY. WE ASSUME THE ISRAELIS COULD BE PERSUADED TO PREVAIL ON THE ENCLAVE COMMANDERS NOT TO FIRE ON U.S. AIRCRAFT, AND OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE OPERATION MIGHT CONFER SOME PROTECTION TO THE UNIT ONCE IT GOT TO TIBNIN.
PARKER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, UNGA RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT04708
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780333-0367
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780861/aaaabyoy.tel
Line Count: 218
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6e02f762-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1731060
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON: SOME UNSPEAKABLE THOUGHTS ABOUT 425.
TAGS: MARR, PINT, PINS, LE, IS, UN
To: STATE TEL AVIV
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6e02f762-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014